2024 Red Earth Leadership Forum Report









The Disaster Resilient: Future Ready (DR:FR) Burnett Inland program is a partnership between the Foundation for Rural Regional Renewal (FRRR) and Red Earth Community Foundation, and has been made possible through the financial support of the National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA) Preparing Australian Communities - Local Stream, and Minderoo Foundation.

Red Earth Community Foundation

Investing in people as a catalyst for a thriving Burnett Inland

Established in 2013, **Red Earth Community Foundation** is a non-profit organisation in the Burnett Inland (which encompasses South Burnett, Cherbourg, and North Burnett).

Red Earth's mission is to invest in people as a catalyst for the Burnett Inland region to thrive into the future. This is achieved through:

The annual **Red Earth Community Leadership Program** - Now in its 11th year, and with over 220 Alumni, Red Earth's flagship leadership program invests in the personal and professional development of those in the Burnett Inland (and beyond).

The annual **Red Earth Leadership Forum** - An opportunity for people from across the Burnett Inland to be inspired, to collaborate, and to co-design the future of their region.

Disaster Resilient: Future Ready Program - In partnership with FRRR, Red Earth is delivering the DR:FR Burnett Inland program to six small communities across the Burnett Inland, increasing disaster preparedness and strengthening resilience. There are also a number of regional projects being rolled out as part of this project.

The organisation's **philanthropic structure** - Red Earth auspices fundraising initiatives that meet the needs of the Burnett Inland, i.e. the recent South Burnett Mental Health Golf Challenge which raised \$70,000 for mental health initiatives in the region.

Red Earth plays a vital role in fostering local philanthropy and empowering the region to address their unique challenges and opportunities.



Why hold a regional forum?

The purpose of the Red Earth Leadership Forum since it began in 2022 has been to

- create collective impact through personal action
- provide a space for local community members and leaders to come together to THINK BIG

 to start a region-wide conversation and develop actions towards co-designing an even better future for the Burnett Inland.

What was the theme?

In 2022 the theme of the Forum was 'Cultivating our Future' and in 2023 'Circularity'.

In 2024, the theme chosen was 'Resilience as an Ecosystem', fostering conversations around both personal resilience and disaster preparedness, resilience, response and recovery.

This year's Forum was part of the delivery of the Disaster Resilient: Future Ready (DR:FR) Burnett Inland program.



The Forum was open to everyone, with tickets available through Red Earth's website www.redearth.org.au.

Over 65 people attended this year's Forum and had the opportunity to absorb insights and be inspired by guest speakers and panellists, as well as participate in break out sessions, and to network and collaborate.



How the day unfolded... Program

Networking opportunity + coffee van

Registrations Open



8:00 AM - 9:00 AM



Welcome & Introductions Setting the Scene	9:00 AM - 9:30 AM
Guest Speaker - Paul Ryan Australian Resilience Centre	9:30 AM - 10:15 AM
Morning Tea	10:15 AM - 10:30 AM
Disaster Resilience Leadership Lounge Facilitated by Paul Ryan	10:30 AM - 11.15 AM
Big Ideas Overview (from 2022 & 2023 Forums)	11.15AM - 11.45AM
Big Ideas Break Out Session 1 Choose Your Theme	11:45 AM - 12.30 PM
Big Ideas Break Out Session 2 Choose Your Theme	12:30 PM - 1:15 PM
Lunch	1:15 PM - 2:00 PM
Guest Speaker - Melanie Bloor President, Resilient Uki	2:00 PM - 2:30 PM
Action Stations including Afternoon Tea	2:30 PM - 3:30 PM
Introduction to DRA Big Map	3:30 PM - 4:15 PM
Alumni Spotlight Facilitated by Amanda Woodward	4:15 PM - 4:30 PM
Wrap up, networking and close	4:30 PM - 5:00 PM

You are invited to 'Hub in a Club' after the Forum. Join us for nibbles and networking from 5.30pm to 7.30pm at the Murgon Services Club.



For more information phone Kimberley on 0409 593 124, email leadership@redearth.org.au or visit www.redearth.org.au/forum

So, what is resilience?

Definition:

Resilience is the ability to cope with tough events and bounce back stronger. By learning to be resilient on multiple levels (personal, family, community, regional), we can better prepare for unchosen or unexpected change, including climatic disasters and other disruptions.



Mentimeter Engagement with Forum Participants What does resilience mean to you?

From 119 responses, **strength** was the most popular response, with **growth**, **sustainability**, **community**, **perseverance**, **persistence**, **prepared and connection** also prominent.





Paul is a global leader in resilience practice and is the founding Director of the Australian Resilience Centre.

Paul has 25 years of experience integrating resilience research, strategy, and practice and has facilitated over 1,200 workshops for 24,000 people, bringing resilience concepts to community, policy, governance, planning, leadership and on-ground practice.

Paul brought knowledge, humour and a down-to-earth approach to the Forum as he spoke about resilience thinking and 'Resilience as an Ecosystem'.

After firstly addressing the fact that the word 'resilience' has been overused, misused and misunderstood, he spoke to the fact that resilience is important. Paul noted that the main purpose of resilience building is to reduce the impacts of acute, cumulative and chronic stress on the brain, therefore decreasing the stress 'curve' during crisis or unchosen change and enabling people to make calmer and wiser choices.

Paul defined resilience as the capacity to cope with change and continue to function in positive ways.

In breaking down this definition of resilience, Paul suggested asking some explorative questions around key words...

Capacity = What capacity is needed? Who needs to have this capacity? When? Where?

Cope = What does it mean to cope in the context of the person or situation... the ability to avoid? to prepare? to absorb? to recover?

Change = What changes are causing the most concern? Are they expected or unpredictable? Do they have compounding impacts?

Positive = What does positive mean in the context of the person, situation or community?

Paul concluded by speaking about three resilience imperatives:

Resolve = Resilience building is a deliberate, active process that is ultimately focused on reducing stress.

Relate = Connection in all directions (within and between family, community, Council, agencies etc)'smooths the way'.

Resource = Understand what is available and needed, but go beyond money and time.

66

We often talk about 'bouncing back'.. but where do you want to bounce to? Resilience building provides the opportunity to bounce to a different and better place.

66

Resilience is ultimately about reducing stress in people's brains and reducing the disruption on people's lives, so that they can focus on their wellbeing and the wellbeing of those around them.

"

Guest Speaker Melanie Bloor Resilient UKI

Melanie Bloor has dedicated her life to trying to save the world. Hailing from Uki, a small village in Tweed Heads NSW, Melanie found herself as a 'go to person' when the township was affected by a flooding and landslip event in early 2022. Since the event and with a passion for building community resilience, Melanie became President of Resilient Uki, a not-for-profit association group focused on supporting the area to prepare for, respond to, and recover from emergencies, disasters and crises.

Melanie brought a unique perspective and on-the-ground experience to her presentation at the Forum. As a community leader well versed in the activation of impactful initiatives, Melanie spoke about community cohesion in disaster resilience and recovery.

Sharing her experience from the 2022 floods in Uki, Melanie shared why being connected and kind saves lives and reduces trauma.

Melanie spoke about the value of neighbourhood gatherings after the floods, and the launch of Resilient UKI (RUKI), including the development of the organisations Neighbourhoods Project and Neighbourhood Activation Plan, which outlines how they activated their neighbourhoods in 8 easy steps.

- 1) **Get mapped** Mapping neighbourhoods to identify pods, properties, hubs, assembly points, fire trails, points of flooding, helicopter landing pads etc
- **2) Gather information** Gathering useful information from all neighbours who wish to participate and storing it securely with access for Neighbourhood and Pod leaders only
- **3) Fun and friendship** Social gatherings to strengthen connections and build a sense of community and cooperation
- **4) Connect up** Ways for neighbours to communicate with each other when we have power, phone reception and internet
- **5) That's a big 10-4** A comprehensive radio network that supports effective communication when all else fails
- **6)** Let's share Neighbours sharing skills and equipment with each other, especially during a crisis
- 7) Head check An agreed way for neighbours to check on neighbours during disasters
- 8) Helping hands Neighbours working together to help each other out when needed

66

You don't have to be best friends, but are you good neighbours?





Disaster Resilience Leadership Lounge

Facilitated by Forum MC Wendy Agar, the Disaster Resilience Leadership Lounge provided opportunity for participants to listen to on-the-ground local champions, plus hear regional and national perspectives, about how communities can be empowered before, during and after a disaster event, while still working together with agency and Council response, to develop resilient and ready people and communities. The panel session was both inspiring and practical.

Leadership Lounge Speakers...

Wendy Agar

Wendy Agar has 20 years of leadership and facilitation experience and is passionate about bringing a practical lens to supporting impactful outcomes for leaders, industry, organisations and communities through her role as CEO at Empowered Outcomes.





Rachael Lehmann

Rachael is a primary producer from Tansey and was awarded Gympie Regional Council's Inaugural Australia Day Resilience Award for her flood recovery efforts. Rachael is passionate about leadership and focuses on projects that help to build strong and sustainable local businesses and community groups.

Scott Lamond

Scott is the editor at ABC Wide Bay and for the past 20 years has presented local, state and national radio programs including the Rural Report, Queensland Country Hour, Breakfast, Mornings, Grandstand Sport, Saturday Night Country and more recently Australia All Over. He has also reported for ABC News Channel. Scott has provided emergency broadcasting for many natural disasters, notably, during and after the 2011 Queensland floods and also a category five cyclone that crossed the coast in the Pilbara.





Nina O'Brien

Nina leads the delivery of the Disaster Resilience & Recovery portfolio at the Foundation for Rural Regional Renewal (FRRR), partnering with communities before, during and after disasters and other climate impacts to develop increased climate resilience across Australia. Nina is passionate about working alongside people that call regional Australia home and making their communities great places to live.

eadership Forum Rep. Page 8

Disaster Resilience Leadership Lounge

Shari Bent

Shari is the Resilience Manager at Disaster Relief Australia.

Motivated by her personal experience during the devastating 2019 bushfires, Shari is dedicated to supporting communities in their recovery from disasters. Shari actively volunteers as a member of the NSW Rural Fire Service and is the Community Engagement Officer in her local brigade. Her advocacy for community-led initiatives reflects her firm belief in the strength of collective action in fostering resilience and facilitating sustainable recovery.





Mark Pitt

Mark Pitt PSM is CEO of South Burnett Regional Council and has over two decades of experience in executive Local Government roles. He has served on various boards, is an active Rotary member and enjoys a variety of hobbies and interests with his family.

Key Takeaways...

66

Council needs to trust community and collaborate with them, because things work best from the ground up.

Mark Pitt, SBRC

66

Strong communities are connected, skilled, resourced and informed. Nina O'Brien, FRRR

99





You may not know your neighbour, or may not like them, but they may be your first responder in an emergency. Shari Bent, DRA





ABC radio (emergency broadcaster) is your companion during a disaster.
Scott Lamond, ABC Wide Bay



Community
is important
Resources
are essential
Trust yourself to
step up as a leader
Rachael Lehmann,
Primary Producer



Mentimeter Engagement with Forum Participants
What is your key takeaway so far for you or your community to be more resilient?

Create connection at every level	Know your neighbours	Intentional networking. Be impactful	Dessimation of information	
As individuals we need to be disaster ready so we can assist beyond our immediate family		Know your neighbours and choose your source of truth wisely		
Connection	lt is everyone's responsibility	Understand where I live better	Be prepared	
Better connection with my community	Sharing "the plan"	Be prepared for disaster that could take place in your community		
Being connected. The importance of groundtruthing	Understand who the organisations are to connect with	Future preparedness needs to include our young people to help build their future resilience		
	aster preparedness and response is everyone's responsibility! your community		Build	
Don't wait for others to do something. Give	Disaster needs greater investment	Check radio and batteries in my own recovery pack	interconnectedness between community members	
yourself permission to prepare and repair Map community groups who is who ir				
Trust your community	We all need to be the calm friend to our neighbours and small	Welcome to the community pack for new residents	community plan and be true to your needs while empowering others	
lt is our responsibility	businesses	Community connections	to keep going	
to make sure the community is prepared	Start with self, neighbours, community	Everyone is accountable. Prepare	Add disaster preparedness	
Know where to go for information	Know your neighbour and neighbourhood		section into our courses	
Don't wait for the usual power brokers to step up, newcomers can lead, coordinate and initiate help and response		Community connection, plan together, intentional networking		
Plan together, including mapping your community	Plan for and beyond the disaster	Despite personal or political differences, when the ship hits the sand, we're all in this together		

Big Ideas and Action Stations Break Out Sessions

In 2022 and 2023 the Forum Break Out Session topics came from the 'Burnett Inland Futures Strategy', however in 2024 the topics were identified during Red Earth's community consultation as part of the DR:FR Burnett Inland program.

It was also an opportunity to make the topics easier to engage with.

It was important to 'bridge the gap' between the previous topics and new topics and to honour the legacy of the past two Forums, while making way for the fresh topics in 2024. In order to do this, previously identified opportunities and ideas generated were integrated under relevant new topics.

Previous Topics Break Out Sessions 2022 and 2023

Tourism
Liveable Communities
Food Systems
Workforce Capability
Natural Resources
Connectivity
Industrial Development
Innovation and Entrepreneurship



New Topics Break Out Sessions 2024

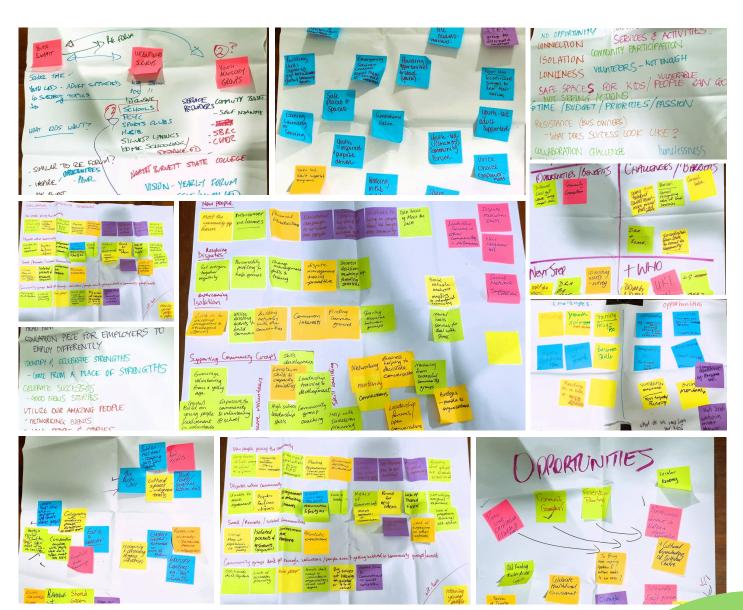
Community Cohesion
Youth Engagement
Volunteer Engagement and Fatigue
Community Places and Spaces
Encouragement Entrepreneurship
and Supporting Small Business

Big Ideas and Action Stations Break Out Sessions

Over two **Big Ideas** break out sessions Forum participants chose two different topics to contribute to. Facilitators hosted conversations to identify challenges and opportunities for each topic through the lenses of resilience, disaster resilience, sustainability and a thriving Burnett Inland for future generations.

During lunch, facilitators drew key themes and opportunities from the information captured and then presented those findings to participants. Everyone then returned to their chosen break out group to take part in **Action Station** activities, where potential projects and possible next steps were identified.

The following pages outline each topic, as well as key themes drawn from the Big Ideas sessions, plus identified opportunities and potential projects.



Activating an Inclusive Community Facilitated by Katie Zerner

Creating an inclusive community involves fostering an environment where everyone feels valued, respected, and included, regardless of their background, abilities, or identities. This includes promoting diversity, equity, and inclusion, and ensuring that all community members have equal access to opportunities and resources. This break out session encouraged conversation about creating a more inclusive Burnett Inland and allowed participants to share their experiences, listen to others, and brainstorm initiatives that promote diversity and equity.

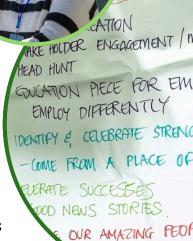
Key themes

Celebration of differences Respect for all

Opportunities

Improved accessibility to public transport, health services, digital connectivity, disability services, arts and cultural events Meaningful conversations Accessible services

Embrace everyone, including new residents, people with all abilities, cultures and demographics



= AIANTS

JUNITIE



Disability services precinct Community-owned public transport Centrally located community centre Roadshow of this Forum

ABC repeater tower

Establishment of a network for collaboration and events Education for employers to employ differently Establishing and utilising platforms for sharing good news stories and success



Community Cohesion Facilitated by Liz Beavis

Community cohesion is a sense of solidarity and connectedness among members of a community. It involves building strong, positive relationships between individuals and groups, promoting mutual respect and understanding, and working towards common goals. High community cohesion results in a supportive and harmonious society where people feel a sense of belonging and responsibility towards each other. This break out session engaged in discussions about how to strengthen community bonds, increase participation at local events, and collaborate on initiatives that help bring people together.

Key themes

Engagement with new people, community disconnect, isolation/small communities, community participation



Opportunities

Sharing our culture
Generational knowledge transfer
Welcome new people
Improve dispute resolution
Overcome isolation
Supporting community groups through
volunteer and skill building



Potential projects

Half-day cultural experience aimed at tourists
Dedicated shared learning/working spaces
Meet the community events / open house, i.e. meet the local group
Leadership & development training
Succession planning
Mentoring from successful community groups
Social network analysis mapping

Youth Engagement Facilitated by Andrew Zerner

Youth engagement is the process of involving young people in meaningful activities and decision-making within their communities. Effective youth engagement empowers young people, helps them develop skills, and ensures that their voices are heard and considered in matters that affect their lives. This breakout session had dialogue about how to better engage youth with participants sharing insights, suggesting youth initiatives, and exploring the idea of collaboration with young people on community projects.

Key themes

A voice that is heard, choice in the things they can do and empowerment Good experiences growing up for positive connection to the region and

therefore more likely to return in adult life

Opportunities

Investing in capacity building of our young people
Hear voices of next generation
Youth being aware of social, educational and
employment opportunities
Youth-led and adult supported projects
Linking youth with organisations
Funding to activate projects



Youth Summit
Incentivised surveys
Youth Advisory Groups
(local, connect regionally)
1,000 Voices Project



Volunteer Engagement and Fatigue Facilitated by Tracey Scanlan

Volunteer engagement involves attracting, involving, and retaining volunteers in community activities and organisations. It includes strategies to motivate and support volunteers. Volunteer fatigue, on the other hand, refers to the exhaustion and burnout that can occur when volunteers are overworked or undervalued. Addressing volunteer fatigue involves recognising volunteers' contributions, providing adequate support, and ensuring a balanced workload. In this break session, conversations were had around volunteer engagement and managing fatigue, as well as how to work together to create strategies that support and sustain volunteers in order to build a more resilient volunteer network.

Key themes

Engaging a broader section of the community, including youth and retirees

Time and resources for training and compliance of volunteers

Ensuring that volunteers feel valued

Governance and compliance and costs associated and complexity

No new blood / same core of volunteers

Community divide

Opportunities

Youth volunteering
Skill sharing across groups
Subsidies for employers to allow volunteering
Creation of social connection
Organisations working together, rather than in silos

Potential projects

Database of volunteers with skill sets for engagement during/after natural disaster
National Volunteering Card to reduce cost of compliance and fatigue of completing courses
Public information campaign to address benefits of volunteering on mental health

Skills sharing between volunteer groups
Youth volunteering to become part of school curriculum

Community Places and Spaces Facilitated by Trudi Bartlett-Rice

Community places and spaces are physical locations within a community where people can gather, interact, and engage in various activities. These can include parks, community centres, libraries, and community hall. Well-equipped and utilised community places and spaces contribute to social interaction, community identity, and overall quality of life by providing accessible and inclusive environments for people to come together. Participants at this break out session joined the conversation about improving community places and spaces, provided feedback on existing spaces, and generated project ideas to create more vibrant and accessible public areas.

Key themes

Better utilisation of places and spaces we already have to bring people together and showcase our natural, cultural and historical stories

Opportunities

Celebrate our natural environment and invite others to share it More hub-like activities to engage with a more diverse group Planning and design of green spaces / community gardens Capturing the cultural and historical stories that are connected

to already established places and spaces

Potential projects

Improved amenities
Themed tourism offerings
Soil health education

Establish Burnett Inland Tourism Action Group

Asset mapping of community infrastructure and disaster readiness

Establishing stock routes / songlines as tourism trail

Build on rail trail by adding camping spots and incorporating cultural and historical stories

Multipurpose hub

Encouraging Entrepreneurship and Supporting Small Businesses Facilitated by Grace Campbell

Encouraging entrepreneurship involves creating an environment that supports the creation and growth of new businesses. This includes providing access to resources, mentorship, funding, and networking opportunities. Supporting small businesses involves participating in and advocating for local spend, as well as offering assistance in areas such as marketing, finance and operations. Both new and existing businesses are crucial for economic development, innovation, and job creation within a community. This break out session engaged in discussions about the economy of the Burnett Inland region and how to support the creation of a thriving environment for entrepreneurship and innovation.

Key themes

Engaging with youth, collaboration through mentoring, activation of growth mindset

Opportunities

Strong agricultural region
Close skills-v- knowledge gap
Develop micro businesses
Business mentoring
Local philanthropy (small giving to community groups)
Being inspired by other regions, i.e. Scenic Rim (food)
Co-op exploration

Potential projects

OPPINA

mentorio

Paddock to Plate enterprises
Capacity building workshops; workforce culture, inclusion and diversity, mentoring, skill sharing / upskilling
Developing waste by-products
Youth Forum
Campaign around philanthropy
*Hub in a Pub.



Mentimeter Engagement with Forum Participants
If you could implement **one bold idea** from the break out sessions, without limitations, what would it be?

Youth Forum	Regional cultural centre	Coaching for communities to resolve disputes	International youth forum to be held here	
Online youth forum	Small business mentorship	Better infrastructure planning and resource audit		
Volunteer network that is not connected to an organisation, rather an area where skills can be shared		Regular youth platform		
Require volunteering as part of school curriculum	Wellbeing framework for volunteers	Global forum of inspiration for youth	Support Country Uni Hub	
National volunteer training, onboarding and Co-operatives register so volunteers can start quickly		More collaboration		
Build a multipurpose centre and small business incubator	Events network and events coaching	Mentoring program for small businesses	Sustainable funding	
Foster regular curious conversations across different folk and groups: Convo Hub		driven by business leaders	Launch a 	
National volunteer card to allow volunteers to apply anywhere	Welcome newcomers	Visiting speakers who inspire and lift inspiration levels	community campaign to welcome newcomers and a commitment from each sector to be welcoming	
Community kindness KPIs	Social network mapping for local area	Connect volunteer festival organisers		
Agri and energy innovation research centre	h Regional tourist trail through Burnett Inland		More conversations with diverse	
Neighbourhood/locality hubs	Community garden	Certificate in Volunteering	minority groups	









Next steps... Activation of working groups

Red Earth is currently seeking funding to activate working groups for each of the six topics in order to ensure tangible outcomes and progress on some of the potential projects identified during the Forum. While Red Earth is a conduit for connection and a vehicle for the generation of great ideas, we can't carry these concepts forward alone. We are excited by the opportunity to scaffold, support and participate in working groups that will 'move the needle forward' on projects that will help shape an even better future for the Burnett Inland.

Evident across all topic areas was the desire for increased youth engagement, the inclination to hear from youth on matters that are important to them, and a strong appetite for a regional Youth Forum/Summit. Red Earth is currently scoping potential partnerships and funding to host a regional Youth Forum.

Mentimeter Engagement with Forum Participants What was your one key takeaway from the Forum?

Why resilience? To reduce stress	We are stronger together	Connections and community are key	A new meaning of what resilience is		
That pivoting and taking a different approach is ok	Collaboration	Great opportunity to understand the challenges and opportunities within the region			
Our regional longevity is being planned for It is a good idea to have a resilience plan to help understand our region and explain it to the next generation					
Resilient communities are kind in heart	lt's possible!	Hope for the future	The power of great ideas and the		
The abundance of	gness empowered to community is where you	manpower to deliver them			
thought and willingness to take ownership of progress		How personal strengths can support community			
We are an amazing region with amazing people!!	up to us where this goes	That every regional community is in the same boat and that we aren't behind or doing a 🙉 job			
The power of community coming together and the relationships that are built and invested in will equal better outcomes for future generations			The importance of inclusivity		

Big Map Break Out Sessions

Those who attended the Forum were the first to see our regional 'Big Map', which has been developed in partnership with Disaster Relief Australia (DRA), as part of the FRRR DR:FR program.

DRA will be hosting 'Big Map' exercises throughout our region in early October 2024, and provided an overview of what Big Map exercises are during the Forum.

Based on military wargame theory, the Big Map is a visual device for stimulating innovative thought. Revolving around a literal 'Big Map' (a giant fabric floor map), the exercise is an opportunity for community members, agencies and Council to gather and work together to identify risks, share experiences, and discuss ways the community can better prepare for disasters and events that may occur in the future.



Mentimeter Engagement with Forum Participants Final survey results

As a result of the Forum...

95% learnt new information

90% met new people and developed new networks

96% were inspired to act on new ideas

100% are likely or very likely to recommend this Forum to a friend

95% are more likely to increase involvement in their local community

82% agree or strongly agree that they increased their knowledge about disaster recovery and resilience

What was the **best thing** about the Forum?

From 67 responses, **networking** was the strongest response, with **collaboration and connection** also prominent.



Thank you...

To be in a room with over 60 people who live in or love the Burnett Inland was inspiring, energising and motivating!

We were touched by stories,
stretched with learning,
and opened to opportunities
for collective action that will help shape the region.

Thank you to everyone who attended the 2024 Red Earth Leadership Forum!









The Disaster Resilient: Future Ready (DR:FR) Burnett Inland program is a partnership between the Foundation for Rural Regional Renewal (FRRR) and Red Earth Community Foundation, and has been made possible through the financial support of the National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA) Preparing Australian Communities - Local Stream, and Minderoo Foundation.

To be kept updated about Forum outcomes, the working groups and/or the Youth Forum, the Big Map exercises, and other Red Earth activities, please subscribe to our mailing list via our website www.redearth.org.au



Red Earth Community Foundation South Burnett Ltd

PO Box 397 Kingaroy Qld 4610

Email: info@redearth.org.au

www.redearth.org.au